

Cummings, Matt

From: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC [Stephanie.Strength@wdc.usda.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, August 04, 2009 12:36 PM
To: Lilley, Bliss; Collins, Carly
Subject: FW: CAPX2020

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

From: zoltancsete@yahoo.com [mailto:zoltancsete@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, August 03, 2009 2:48 PM
To: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC
Subject: CAPX2020

N-006-001
N-006-002
N-006-003
N-006-004

I am very concerned and at the same time outraged that we are thinking about funding the CAPX2020 project. It clearly is not needed and we should be focusing our efforts and investments toward cleaner energy. This power line WILL affect our area in countless ways. Decreased property values, so many environmental effects, and energy that we will not even use in our area. These are just a few of the outcomes of CAPX2020. I support the Trempealeau County Citizen's Energy Task Force of Western Wisconsin. Please don't let big energy outvoice our citizens and our environment. Please stand up for us and help us. Please let me know if there's anything I can do. Thank you,
Zoltan Csete

Bellow is the letter from the energy task force.

Re: USDA/RUS EIS Scoping

The Trempealeau County Citizen's Energy Task Force of Western Wisconsin, would like to go on record as opposing the granting of financial assistance to Dairyland Power Company of La Crosse, Wisconsin and would like to submit comments to be included with the EIS scoping to wit:

This transmission line is being represented to local residents at meetings held by CAPX2020 representatives to be a "redundant" line to make electrical service to our area more secure and more reliable. Riverland Energy Coop, a member of Dairyland Energy Coop would hardly be involved in this project otherwise. This seems inconsistent with the siting of a substation that would permit Riverland Energy to have access to the power on this line being on the far side of Trempealeau County. If this energy was for local use, it would have been dropped down at Alma and transmitted as lower voltages than 345 kv, to eliminate the expense of high tension lines unnecessarily crossing the entire county at \$860,000/mile cost. La Crosse wouldn't need 345kv service coming through Trempealeau. They don't need that much new capacity. This project is extremely wasteful of financial and environmental resources for a "redundant" line. A back-up line clearly doesn't need to be larger than the primary feeds.

It appears to us that the real justification for constructing this line is to wholesale cheap energy produced in North Dakota and soon South Dakota, to Chicago and points east. Not only does this require us in Trempealeau County to bear the financial burden of constructing the line; we must suffer the losses to our undeveloped and natural, rural environment. Furthermore, it creates more problems for Wisconsin and Minnesota with respect to air quality, due to being downwind from coal plants too dirty to meet Wisconsin and Minnesota emission standards, not to mention the additional contributions to atmospheric carbon.

Trempealeau County is geologically unique in being a large part of that small, unglaciated bioregion, called the

N-006-001

Your comment has been noted. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will describe, in detail, project purpose and need. Alternatives to the project will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The justification document which has been accepted by the RUS is the Alternative Evaluation study which is available at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Alternatives to the project will also be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement nd will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

N-006-002

Your comment has been noted. Socioeconomic impacts to property values affected by the transmission line will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

N-006-003

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to wildlife, vegetation, and wetlands will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

N-006-004

Your comment has been noted. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will describe, in detail, project purpose and need. The justification document which has been accepted by the RUS is the Alternative Evaluation study which is available at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>.

Driftless Area. This area owes much of its agricultural and tourist economy to this relatively pristine traditional rural landscape, featuring small farms, including specialty, Amish, and organic farms, historic buildings, bike trails, small family businesses, and life in the slow lane. The kind of development that more urban areas in the state have seen has for most purposes passed Trempealeau County by.. In fact we only have one traffic light in the entire county. It is hard for us to understand why we should allow this kind of desecration of our landscape to happen unless absolutely necessary, which this power line is clearly not.

Our Trempealeau County Citizens Energy Task Force is undertaking a study to determine how a distributed or decentralized electric energy distribution network could meet our local energy needs with renewable resources and programs to conserve energy and encourage its more efficient use by local residents and businesses, so that we can manage adequately with the existing distribution network, at great savings to ourselves as ratepayers, and the American taxpayer.

There is incredible interest in our community in moving in the direction of using renewable and sustainable energy resources. One would think the utilities would want to economize by switching over to distributed generation, instead of incurring these huge expenditures of public money.

We see the current slowdown in energy demand as the perfect time and place to switch course away from fossils fuels and nuclear technology and toward sustainable and clean means of procuring our energy. We have contacted Governor Doyle about working with him and his Energy Task Force, and offered to share with him our ideas about how the State could facilitate a more democratic and grass-roots approach to developing distribution systems, instead of relying on corporate monopolies to decide what is best for us. It doesn't make sense at this point to be investing billions of dollars in antiquated, dirty, technologies which lock us in to 50 years or more of the same negative environmental impacts.

Many of our group members and the larger members of the community are very worried about the environmental implications of what we understand would be an underwater crossing of the CAPX2020 line at Alma, Wisconsin. The bottom of the Mississippi River at that location is laden with environmental toxins in the form of PCBs that must not be disturbed! Trenching or even tunneling across the river at that point is an environmental disaster waiting to happen. With surface temperatures of the line reputed to be around 300 degrees, cooling this line could also represent an environmental challenge. In talking to employees of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, it appears they clearly do not want this power line to cross the Mississippi, anywhere, and the Alma choice is merely their preference as a last resort. An unnecessary, "redundant" power line, which will not serve our area, and which the regional economy cannot afford at present, is just not worth the risk! Energy consumption is experiencing a decelerating trend. DOE statistics show rates of increase approaching just a few percent. Xcel Energy has reported a nearly 12% drop in demand between 2006 and 2008. With solar and wind technology beginning to show their presence, our use of energy produced by fossil fuels and nuclear fuels is likely to begin to decline, not increase. Let's give these new technologies a chance to prove they can replace toxic ways of producing energy.

Let the new smart grid and distributed generation concepts take hold.

In a few short weeks since some of the local residents living in the proposed corridor have heard about this project, our group sponsored a booth at the Trempealeau County Fair to alert citizens who had not heard about it. The booth had limited exposure and a rather unrepresentative sampling of county wide attitudes toward CAPX2020, but nearly everyone we talked with was outraged by this project. We found several people directly in the proposed path of this power line who had not been informed of meetings or even of the possibility of the line being located near their residences. We believe that certainly everyone in the proposed corridor should have been directly contacted, registered mail, return receipt requested, and that multiple notices should have been published in local newspapers to insure people in the entire county were notified about this project. All federal taxpayers and ratepayers have a stake in this issue, not just people living in the corridor! This county is truly in the dark about this project. Among reasons for concern among fair-goers stopping at our booth were: Reduced property values, the effects of emfs on the health of children and the elderly, higher utility rates, the deterioration of the beauty of our rural landscape, the siting of a substation to serve La Crosse and Holmen in OUR county, no hearings in Holmen, and the obvious fact that these lines are not for us.

We managed to get quite a few of them to sign a petition to the USDA/RUS to deny funding to Dairyland

Power to participate in this project. We are continuing to circulate the petition and will submit it in opposition to the project at a later date. For the purposes of this scoping comment process, we are including a copy of the petitions as of the close of the comment period, in pdf format. The same pages are also being submitted by fax with other petitions submitted by the Minnesota CETF. We anticipate that our ongoing efforts to secure signatures for our petition will be in the higher hundreds in a short period of time.

We are very concerned with the lack of effective notice given by Dairyland Power and Xcel Energy to affected residents. We contacted Xcel Energy and offered to help inform people about the project, but they refused to cooperate with our requests for names and addresses of people who they were supposed to have contacted.

According to the Sierra Club, this information is supposed to be in the public domain and they should have been required to give it to us. To the credit of Dairyland Power, we were given some maps and literature by them to pass on to the public. But there seems to be no interest on the parts of the CAPX2020 consortium to involve the public actively in routing this line. It seems our only opportunity to have input, is through this comment procedure, which feels awfully insignificant. For a project that is suppose to be in the public interest, this looks suspiciously aimed toward investors in utilities, not the public

Please do not fund this project. It is an environmental disaster! Thank you!

Respectfully,

Ron Reimer

Nancy Horton

Representing Trempealeau Citizens Energy Task Force